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ABSTRACT

Teaching techniques for motivating students to acquire a second language are discussed. The methodology must be suited to the aptitudes, interests, and personalities of learners and teachers. Objectives must relate to the student population, linguistic performance, and communicative competence. Crucial to motivation are the techniques of selection, gradation, presentation, and meaningful practice of interrelated phonological, morphological, lexical, syntactical, and cultural items. Teachers must: (1) use the mother tongue sparingly; (2) make everything clear to the students; (3) keep the students' everyday language needs in mind; (4) adapt texts to individual classes; (5) individualize instruction; (6) give students a feeling of achievement; (7) promote awareness and acceptance of cultural pluralism through discussion of native cultures; (8) assist students in transferring knowledge acquired to new language situations; and (9) give frequent, brief, previously announced tests to keep students aware of their progress. Students need to be respected, challenged, and successful to learn language while teachers need to be self-confident and dedicated to motivate the learners. (PMJ)

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MOTIVATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Let us examine the roles each of us can play in Language Teaching. If we are to teach English and other languages efficiently and effectively to the growing number of peoples throughout the world who wish to learn them, the collaboration of interested personnel from many countries is essential. We must make every effort to share the knowledge acquired by linguists and scientists in related areas through the wider pooling of research findings and through the replication of promising studies in more than one country and with different groups of students and teachers. We must involve classroom teachers in every phase of research; we must, moreover, adopt a universally accepted terminology which will decrease frustration among language teachers who are asked to translate applicable research theory into concrete teaching practice. We must, finally, be prepared to admit that we may have been too preoccupied in the past several decades with studying the scientific bases of the teaching and/or learning process without giving enough recognition to the empirical, intangible, intuitive practices of classroom teachers which may well be at the very core of student motivation and which can result in successful and pleasurable language acquisition.

I am not suggesting that teachers should not be cognizant of sound theoretical bases derived from linguistics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and other relevant sciences. What I am suggesting is that we devote greater attention to the study of factors within the teachers and learners and in the community in which they live or from which they come, since these appear to have a much greater impact on the learning process than has been assumed in the past. In essence, I am suggesting that our focus in teaching-learning related research should shift from an overweaning pre-occupation with language models, learning theories, or technological advances to a concern for the learner, his interaction with the teacher and his peers, and his attitudes toward learning which are, in part, the result of forces and pressures in his environment.

As we know, learners bring to the classroom attitudes and personal strategies for acquiring knowledge which will determine whether or not they will, in fact, learn. A high intelligence quotient and "aptitude" for language learning or a scientifically prepared teaching lesson will not necessarily produce desired results if the student's attitude becomes negative and counter-productive. Notice please, that I said "becomes" rather than "is" because the majority of students generally undertake the study of a new language with enthusiasm and with a sincere desire to succeed. In too many cases, I am afraid, the enthusiasm wanes all too quickly. What are the underlying reasons for this deplorable state? The answer to my question is not simple and must be sought in a multiplicity of factors which impinge on the learning process itself.

A slightly different version of this speech was presented at the CATESOL State Conference, San Francisco, 1978.

And so, we come to the central theme of the thoughts I hope to share with you: the sustaining and enhancing of student motivation. The interest, enthusiasm, and readiness for learning with which students generally come to us can be sustained--enhanced, in fact--through the continuing attention of the school and especially of the individual teacher to the satisfaction of both the cognitive and affective needs existing within the learner. Let us examine several ways in which this crucial goal might be achieved. I use the term "crucial" since, in my own case and in that of many others whom I have known, joy in the success experienced in one subject area "spilled over" to all other school subjects; and it is this kind of joy that we as teachers want to give to our students. With respect to the learner and to language acquisition, then, it may be interesting to use the term "motivation" itself as a mnemonic device and to note what each letter might suggest to us as teachers hoping to sustain and enhance our students' enthusiasm for learning.

The letter "M" calls to mind immediately Professor Lambert's and his colleagues' recent studies on instrumental and integrative motivation. You will recall that by instrumental motivation is meant the desire on the part of the learner to acquire the language as an instrument of communication which may lead to better grades in school, to better-paid employment and to upward social mobility; integrative motivation, on the other hand, refers to the learner's desire to be accepted by the speakers of the foreign language and to identify with them. In my opinion, both types of motivation should be fostered, where feasible, in the classroom. In many places throughout the world, however, integrative motivation is difficult to achieve, to say the least. In my youth, educators also distinguished between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation, the desire to do well on an examination or in a class recitation, will generally become intrinsic when the learner experiences the feeling of security and achievement resulting from successful performance. A primary responsibility of teachers is to transform an initially extrinsic motivation into a permanently intrinsic one.

Four other words beginning with "M" are also vitally important in our mnemonic term "motivation." For example, methodology must be flexible, not dogmatic or prescriptive. Adherence to such statements in books and articles in the all-too-recent-past as "Reading must be deferred for one hundred hours," or "dialogues must be memorized," or "translation must be banned," or "we must never talk about the language," without any consideration given to such important factors as the age of the learners and the objectives of the program, has often stifled student motivation and has set language teaching back fifty years. Methodology, moreover, must be suited to the aptitudes, and interests of the learners and to the personality of the teacher. To continue with our "M" words, the meaning of everything learners hear and say must be made crystal clear to them; their mother tongue should be used sparingly but judiciously in the classroom if comprehension is at a standstill and if learners are completely frustrated or reciting in parrot-like fashion. And, in general, mastery should be led up gradually through varied activities and experiences and not through brute memorization.

Let us move on to the letter "O," which can represent objectives. Teachers, schools, and education officials should ask continuously: "Are these objectives realistic for this age group, in this community, with these learners, and within the time available? Are they valuable to the students not only for their future lives but also for their present lives? If not, how can we modify them to make them so?" I cannot go along with today's dogmatic emphasis on performance objectives in which a certain body of knowledge must be acquired in a certain way within

a prescribed limit of time. Although some writers argue that performance objectives tell the students exactly what is expected of them, such objectives discount other more important psychological factors, causing unnecessary tension in students. As we know, all human beings have different styles and different rhythms of learning. Only the sensitive teacher can pause and turn back when necessary and tell merely by looking at the students when fatigue and tension may vitiate learning altogether.

With regard to objectives, I also believe it would be fair to say that the primary goal of language teaching today is to help learners use language in the multiple functions it serves and to develop their communicative competence; that is, to enable learners to understand and to produce language which is not only correct but also appropriate in the social situations in which it is generally used. In order to achieve such a goal, the language teaching curriculum should include the study--presentation and practice--of language varieties or registers and of non-linguistic features such as body distances, facial expressions, groans, and other unarticulated sounds which are normally used in spoken communication. It should also provide for activities which stimulate learners to express themselves--to agree, to disagree, to express love, anger, and any other human emotions-as well as to engage in conversation, to persuade, to direct, or to create. It is not enough to teach the forms of linguistic items; we must also make students aware of the contexts and the situations in which they would be used by native speakers.

The comments to be made under the letter "T" refer primarily to the teacher--the crucial variable in the learning process--whose significance actually permeates this entire paper. Let us be honest and acknowledge that the moment of truth--the implementation of the curriculum and, more importantly, the enhancement of motivation--occurs when the teacher closes the classroom door and greets his or her students with a warm, welcoming smile. So let us, instead, use the letter "T" to represent the term technique. For example, the good teacher's technique will engage students in practice learning not only to habit formation but also to the internalization of the rules which govern the formation and use of language. The rules, if verbalized by students over the age of eleven or so, will not be prescriptive but will describe the oral and written form of the important elements in any structure, the position of the structure in the sentence, its function, and, of course, its meaning. Under technique I would include, too, the logical presentation and practice of linguistic items which belong together in a context or in a situation which has been prepared in advance: for example, the emphasis on I and you in the teaching of verb forms; or the advantage of exploiting the same piece of material in a text or one prepared by the teacher as a springboard for listening, speaking, reading, and writing as well as for the practice of linguistic elements within these abilities; or the attention to communicative competence from the first day of class; or the division of instructional material such as dialogues and reading into two parallel streams. As quickly as feasible, learners should be helped to understand, repeat, and read interesting, meaningful material even though they may have only a global comprehension of it, even though some of the structures within it will not be presented for active production (oral or written) for several days or months. At the same time, of course, learners will be systematically but gradually taught the phonemes of the language, the inflections and derivations, the word order, the sound-symbol relationship, the words which may co-occur, etc. How boring it would be for young adults to have to learn phonemes, modals, demonstratives, etc. before being able to say, "May I have this dance?" for example! Most importantly, precedence should be given to the structures (not taken from "lists" computer-prepared in some ivory tower) which students need in order to talk about their environment, their needs, their desires, and other matters relevant to them.

The need for involving students in all phases of the program and of integrating them in groups indicates that the letter "I" represents some crucially important factors in keeping motivation at a high level. As teachers, we must rid ourselves of the old idea that there are passive communication abilities such as listening and reading. Both listening and reading require the most active involvement on the part of the students. Further, the strengths and weaknesses of students should be taken into account as we assign classwork and homework. For example, if we ask them to prepare cultural projects for presentation to the class of to write dialogues or compositions, we must make sure that each student participates in every lesson to the best of his present ability. We must, for instance, realize that some students will never be able to write creative compositions on abstract topics because they might not be able to even in their mother tongues.

The term "integration" refers also to the efforts the teacher must expend to make sure students realize that all levels of language--phonological, morphological, syntactical, lexical, and cultural--are integrated, interrelated, in every act of communication. Most important in bringing about this awareness is the deliberate reinsertion in lessons of the linguistic or cultural elements acquired at previous learning levels or in previous lessons. Students gain a feeling of achievement as they meet, recognize, and produce known language in wider contexts or in different, appropriate social situations. Our letter "I" also suggests the judicious use of incidental happenings in the community or in the nation in order to make lessons immediately relevant to the learners.

To me, the letter "V" is perhaps of overriding importance. The positive values that we help students acquire as they learn bits and pieces of language and of cultural facts will remain with them long after they may have forgotten an irregular past participle. Students should be helped to appreciate the universality of the human experience, not only being aware of their own culture and values, but also of the culture and values of other peoples. Our goal, however, should not be merely to make people bicultural by increasing their awareness of their culture and that of speakers of the target language, but rather to help them to accept and respect cultural pluralism. Concentrating on similarities among peoples rather than on differences will have a more far-reaching and positive psychological effect on learners than the invidious comparisons that often characterize the teaching of culture.

We will now move on, under the letter "A," to attitudes--those of the students, teachers, community members, peers, and others with whom the student comes into contact. These will all affect motivation to some extent, but it is primarily the attitude of the teacher toward the student and toward his own profession which is most important. Is he enthusiastic, sympathetic, patient, well-prepared? Does he respect each student as an individual, and does he expect and warrant respect in return? Does he show sensitivity in correcting student's errors? For example, unless there is total lack of comprehension on the part of the students, particularly the more timid ones, learners should not be interrupted and corrected when they are expressing themselves. (You may make a mental note of an error instead and give general or individual practice in it at another time.) On the other hand, errors in drills or exercises, should be corrected immediately, preferably by the teacher who will merely say "Listen" and give the model followed by individual and/or class repetition. (The teacher might ask another student to give the model only if peer relationships in the class are good ones and non-competitive.) Finally, it would be a grave disservice to all students in the class and to the student who made the error which might thus be reinforced if the teacher were to praise a completely bad sentence such as "He doesn't got no pencil."

I need not tell you that I believe firmly in words of encouragement and praise whenever possible. The best attitude to take in correcting errors and indeed in any aspect of teaching is to rely on our common sense and our feeling for our learners.

The letter "A" also reminds us that teachers should plan a wide gamut of satisfying, productive activities for each lesson; that students should be given the feeling through such activities that they are achieving and growing toward objectives which they consider worthwhile. "A" also stands for the educational term "articulation." Articulation has two important dimensions: vertical and horizontal. Vertical articulation ensures that the students' progress from one learning level to the next is continuous and smooth. The syllabus or curriculum should provide for the review of material learned at lower levels and for the preparation of students for subsequent levels. Horizontal articulation is particularly necessary when different teachers are responsible for the teaching of pronunciation or reading or grammar at any one level to the same groups so that the students can appreciate the interrelations among them. As we noticed above, the integration of disparate linguistic or cultural items into meaningful acts of communication would also come under the heading of horizontal articulation.

"T" may stand for transfer of learning, for translation, for textbooks, and for testing, of course. Let us start with transfer of learning of one linguistic item--verb endings to other verbs, at a beginning level for example. Unless the teacher specifically points out the common elements within the forms and, in addition, gives practice in their use in contexts or situations other than those in which they were presented, the majority of students will not know how and when to transfer the knowledge they have acquired. In addition, it is not generally useful to "tag on" explanations; for example, to say, "The verb need is never used in the present continuous--and want and like behave likewise." Examples and extensive practice in the verbs will have to be given to ensure proper "transfer."

There are two facts that I consider particularly necessary to mention under the term "translation" since there seems to exist so much misunderstanding about them: One, it is perfectly normal for learners above the age of about five to think of the equivalent of a term or a structure in their native tongue as they hear the term in the foreign language. The art and skill of the teacher will reside in eliminating this intermediate step of translation between the referent and the foreign language through a variety of briskly done activities. But let us not be distressed at the fact that, particularly in early learning levels, coordinate bilingualism is rare indeed. Two, without wishing to advocate the return to the traditional grammar-translation method, it is desirable at early levels to ask students--after all other appropriate oral drills have been engaged in--to give the equivalent of limited structural items from the target language to the native language and vice versa. (Please notice that I would recommend that students use their native language for a minute or two first since this will be easier for them.) At intermediate and advanced levels, equivalents of expressions, sentences, and even paragraphs may often be necessary and could well constitute a saleable skill we should help students acquire. The total ban on translation--equivalent expressions--is not realistic, particularly in countries where translation is required on final examinations.

With reference to textbooks, we must face the fact that the perfect text will never be written for us and for our students. It will be the teacher's responsibility to add dialogues, change the order of exercises or of sentences within the exercises, and to add to or delete sections which are particularly counter-

productive. Testing and evaluation of students' competence and performance, of the objectives of the syllabus, and of our own teaching procedures should be an integral part of the language teaching program. I believe in frequent, brief, and previously announced tests which will keep us and the students informed of their progress toward the multiple goals they are expected to achieve. Successful results in tests and/or modification of teaching procedures which may become necessary because of the errors made by students will go a long way toward sustaining their motivation.

And now let us return to another letter, "I." In this instance, I should like to discuss two issues which have appeared with increasing frequency in journals and other publications in the past several years. These two issues are the question of linguistic interference and of individualization of instruction. With regard to the former, there is a great deal of experimentation being conducted at this time to determine whether it is solely the interference between the first language and the target language which causes students to make errors--in other words, whether the interference is interlinguistic. If so, the contrastive analyses which were dear to the hearts of many linguists in the early sixties, would still be of inestimable value, and work in this area should be continued with all deliberate speed. However, another group of scholars contends that intralinguistic interference is more, or at least, as important, and that analyses of students' oral and written errors would demonstrate that it is not necessarily a conflict between the first and second language but ignorance or an incomplete knowledge of a linguistic class or category in the target language which may produce false analogies and cause problems as students move toward full linguistic acquisition. In this case, we may have to reevaluate notions of selection, gradation, presentation, and practice to overcome student deficiencies. I would recommend that work be continued in the areas both of contrastive and error analysis. Any research which will help minimize student errors or reassure students that so-called "errors" are quite normal will contribute to enhanced motivation.

With regard to the second issue, individualization of instruction is theoretically desirable and necessary. Since human beings will have developed different modes of learning before they enter the foreign language program and since each of us may learn at different rates, the idea of individualization is certainly valid. As a teacher, however, I must raise my voice in protest against the exaggerations suggested by some exponents of individualization. It would become an arduous and virtually unsurmountable task for the classroom teacher to prepare the numerous activities and tests which would be needed if all instruction were truly individualized. We should, of course, make use of the strengths and interests of individual students; we can vary questions, homework assignments, and group participation depending on their strengths or weaknesses. But we should also prepare class-wide activities for a good part of each teaching lesson, especially prior to the truly advanced, professional levels. This procedure is more realistic and feasible for the teacher, and it will give students not only the feeling that they belong to a group but also that they are not continually missing out on something happening in another part of the room.

I will be very brief about the letter "O." To me, it symbolizes the importance of guided teacher observation where possible, not only of other master teachers but sometimes of less able teachers. It also serves as a reminder of the necessity for teachers to be aware of the student's quality of involvement, participation, expression, and attitude during the class hour. The teacher should evaluate the student's progress toward goals not only through formal oral and written tests but

also through sensitive observation.

We have arrived at the last letter in our mnemonic: "N." In discussing it, I should like to start with a plea: that we help and indeed encourage our students to talk about their native culture in the target language. Such a procedure is not only psychologically sound, but it will reaffirm the students' conviction that the foreign language is an instrument of communication just as their native tongue is. Ardent exponents of cultural immersion in the target language have ignored the psychological and linguistic values of being able to talk about one's own native culture and about using the students' known, familiar environment as a starting point for teaching.

"N", particularly with regard to motivation, stands for the entire gamut of the affective and cognitive needs of every human being. All students need to be exposed to a wide array of interesting, challenging experiences; they need to feel that they are moving forward continuously and that they are increasingly able to perceive and to integrate the experiences to which they are exposed; they need to feel secure not only in their knowledge of the foreign language and culture, but in the understanding and respect of teachers and peers. They need to feel that they belong to a group and that they can hope for many small successes. They need to look forward to their language classes not with fear but with a feeling of pleasurable anticipation.

To teachers Motivation includes not only understanding the learner, his feelings, his aspirations and his spiritual and creative needs but also his whole world which he brings with him into our classroom. Finally, teachers, too, have needs over and above the knowledge of linguistics, sociology, and psychology. In order to sustain their students' motivation, they need the courage to discard non-productive theories and to question panaceas or slogans. They need confidence in themselves to use their intuition and to develop their fortes. They need to be made aware that they are the most important "workers" in any society. They need to experience success, they need to be helped to sense the difference between teaching human beings a language and teaching a language to human beings, and they need constantly to live a commitment to teaching and to the idea that all normal human beings can learn.

Those teachers who live with continued commitment to their profession will be amply repaid by the heightened motivation of their students who, when they attain a post which will benefit their society and, we hope, the world, when asked how they attained it, will say, "Well, you see, I had a teacher once....." To those of us who have made teaching our life-work, there can be no greater reward.